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CS 601 Christian Ethics

James R. Thobaben

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CS 601: Christian Ethics
Asbury Theological Seminary
J-Term 2004

January 20 - 23
8:30 am - 4:00 pm

James R. Thobaben, Ph.D.
Office Location: Estes 107
Office Phone: 858-2369 Home Phone 858-8058

Office Hours: During J-Term by appointment

Purpose:

To prepare students for ministry by training them to analyze and address the moral life from a Christian perspective. To enable ministers to equip their congregations for understanding moral responsibility and for practicing ministry with integrity. To assist in training ministers who will draw all persons, including those who are excluded by society, into the care and guidance of the community of faith under the Lordship of Christ. To assist in the training of ministers who will exemplify the Gospel-mandated holy life.

Objectives:

Students will be able:

- To provide a biblical basis for the moral life.
- To describe various historical and contemporary Christian interpretations of social and personal moral issues.
- To use the basic vocabulary of ethical analysis.
- To use basic tools of social analysis.
- To explain the Wesleyan emphasis on the various dimensions of holiness, specifically the expectation for personal integrity, moral concern, and social responsibility.
- To recognize and explain at a basic level: the needs, contexts, and insights of various cultural groups and marginalized communities in society and in the church (these may include, but are not limited to, particularity arising from ethnic, gender, class, and geographic locations).
- To explain how responses to moral problems and moral integrity shape congregational life.

Texts: Dayton, Donald W., Discovering an Evangelical Heritage (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988).
Miles, Rebekah L. The Pastor as Moral Guide (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999).
Packet (*readings are not necessarily in order*)

Evaluation:

- 35% Take-Home Integrative Essay on Historical Ethics
- 35% Take-Home Case Ethical Study
- 30% Final Examination (short answer, 45 minutes)
- Debit: For inadequate class participation and/or late or incomplete reading.

Grade Range: Work for CS 601 will be evaluated at a graduate/professional school level.

- A = Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objective**
- A- =**
- B+ =**
- B = Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives**
- B- =**
- C+ =**
- C = Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives**
- C- =**
- D+ =**
- D = Marginal work: inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives**
- D- =**
- F = Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives**

Participation: Students are required to complete all assigned readings. Reading Records will be collected on the last day of class. Failure to complete readings on time may result in a lowering of the final grade, as will poor attendance for class. Attendance will be taken. The deduction for low participation and/or late or incomplete reading of assigned material will be up to 10% against the final grade (a full letter grade reduction).

Written Work: All written work must be typed with 12 point type, one inch margins on all four sides, and true double spacing. Follow page limit requirements. There will be a penalty for late papers commensurate with the degree of lateness and the adequacy of the excuse. Papers are due in class on assigned date.

All written work must use inclusive language when reference is made to human beings (male and female). This provides for both greater inclusion and greater precision. For more information on this topic see 'Guidelines for the Asbury Experience' (p.10).

Take-Home Integrative Essays (due at beginning of class Wednesday January 21, 5 pages, typed, double-spaced) Three essay questions will require moral reflection on, and integration of, the various biblical and historical materials.

Final Examination (in class Monday January 26, 9:00 am; one hour limit; in class – the exam will be given on the Monday following completion of class meetings; those who MUST be gone can take the exam under a proctor with permission of professor) The examination is oriented toward objective knowledge of ethical theory and historic traditions.

Take-Home Case Study (due in Dr. Thobaben's office Wednesday January 28, 9:00 am; 5 pages, typed, double-spaced) Case Study will describe an issue in ministry and will require analysis from various moral and social perspectives.

Day 1 *January 20*

Overview of course & introduction to terms,

Role of Scripture in ethics, overview of central biblical themes

Plantinga, Cornelius "Spiritual Hygiene and Corruption," in Not the Way It's Supposed To Be (Eerdmans, 1995)

Historical Foundations for Christian Ethics

Assigned Scriptures

Plato, "Parable of the Cave" & "Ring of Gyges" Republic

"Didache," in The Apostolic Fathers: An American Translation (Harper, 1950)

Augustine, "Of the Morals of the Catholic Church," Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers 1, Vol IV

Benedict of Nursia, selections "The Rule of Benedict in English" (Liturgical Press, 1982)

Day 2 *January 21*

Historical Interpretations of God's Rule over the World and the Christian's Relation to the World

Augustine, selections from Book XIX, The City of God (NPNF1, Vol. II)

Martin Luther, "Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should Be Obeyed" (Luther's Works, Vol. 45)

John Calvin, The Institutes of the Christian Religion (selections on human nature, sin, & Christian Life)

"Schleitheim Confession," in The Reformation: A Narrative History (Baker, 1982)

Allen, Joseph, "Moral Conflicts IV: Wrongdoers & the Wronged," in Love and Conflict: A Covenantal Model of Christian Ethics (Abingdon, 1984)

Wesleyan Insights and Practices for Christian Ethics

Wesley, John "Causes of the Inefficacy of Christianity," Sermon CXX

Marquardt, Manfred, "The Social Work of the Early Oxford Methodists" and "Wesley's and the Methodist Societies' Aid to the Poor," in John Wesley's Social Ethics (Abingdon, 1992) [Readings on RESERVE]

Dunning, H. Ray, "Salvation as Restoration" & "Christian Ethics for the People of God," in Reflecting the Divine Image (InterVarsity, 1998)

Heitzenrater, Richard, "The Imitatio Christi and the Great Commandment: Virtue and Obligation in Wesley's Ministry with the Poor," in Portion of the Poor (Kingswood Books, 1995)
 Dayton, Donald, Discovering an Evangelical Heritage, entire book

Take-Home Integrative Essays due at beginning of class Wednesday January 21

Day 3 *January 22*

The Church as a Community of Personal and Social Holiness

Gutierrez, Gustavo, "Introduction to Rev. Edition," A Theology of Liberation (rev.) (Orbis, 1988)
 Volf, Miroslav "Exclusion and Embrace: Theological Reflections in the Wake of 'Ethnic Cleansing'" in Emerging Voices in Global Christian Theology, ed. William Dyrness (Zondervan, 1994)
 Callahan, Sidney, "To Bear Wrongs Patiently," in With All Our Heart and Mind (Crossroad, 1988)
 Hauerwas, Stanley, "The Servant Community: Christian Social Ethics," in The Peaceable Kingdom (Univ. of Notre Dame, 1983)

The Church as a Community of Reconciliation: Race and Ethnicity

Wesley, John, "Thoughts Upon Slavery"
 Douglass, Frederick "Appendix," Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass (Dover, 1995)
 Wallis, Jim, "America's Original Sin," in America's Original Sin: A Study on White Racism (Washington, D.C.: Sojourners Resource Center, 1992)
 Perkins, Spencer & Rice, Chris, "More Than Skin Deep" and "Kingdom Choices" in More Than Equals (InterVarsity Press, 1993)
 González, Justo L., "The Significance of a Minority Perspective" and "Who Are We?" in Mañana: Christian Theology from a Hispanic Perspective (Abingdon, 1990)

Day 4 *January 23*

The Church as a Community of Reconciliation: Gender

Sojourner Truth, selections including "Arn't I a Woman" and "Ain't I a Woman" in Can I Get a Witness?, ed. Marcia Riggs (Orbis, 1997)
 Koch, Margaret & Van Leeuwen, Mary Stewart, "Feminism and Christian Vision," in After Eden (Eerdmans, 1993)
 Gilligan, Carol, "Moral Orientation & Moral Development," in Women and Moral Theory (Rowan & Littlefield, 1987)

Pastors, Church Leaders, and Moral Formation

Miles, Rebekah, The Pastor as Moral Guide, pages 1-59, 103-126.

FOLLOWING MONDAY: **Final Examination: in class Monday January 26, 9:00 am**; one hour limit; in class – the exam will be given on the Monday following completion of class meetings; those who MUST be gone can take the exam under a proctor with permission of professor.

FOLLOWING WEDNESDAY: **Take-Home Case Study: due in Dr. Thobaben's office Wednesday January 28, 9:00 am**. 5 pages, typed, double-spaced.

ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES & TIMES

TAKE-HOME INTEGRATIVE ESSAYS: Wednesday, January 21 @ 9:00am

FINAL EXAM Monday, January 26 @ 9:00 am (≈45 minutes; one hour provided)

CASE STUDY Wednesday, January 28 @ 9:00 am